



**MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
April 2, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm.

**Present:** Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Tom Skjaret, Jahn Dyvik, Michelle Jerde, and Deirdre Kvale (arrived at 5:36 pm)

**Staff Present:** City Administrator: Scott Weske; Public Works Director: Sean Diercks; and City Attorney: John Thames

**Absent:** None

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVE AGENDA**

*A motion was made by Jerde, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.*

**OPEN CORRESPONDENCE**

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**Discussion of Additional Full-Time Public Works Maintenance Worker Position**

City Administrator Weske explained that information had been provided in Council members' regular meeting packets regarding the idea of adding a full-time employee to the Public Works Department, including a proposed new job description for the position of full-time Public Works Maintenance Worker. The job description for this position had not been updated since 2006.

Public Works Director Diercks explained some of the areas the job description that had needed updating.

The Council discussed the job description and questioned whether ongoing training should be included.

Diercks stated that it is not included specifically because it is implied through the requirements for the position.

Council member Skjaret asked if the idea was to have this position as "temporary" until the next Public Works employee retires.

Weske stated that the intent of the hiring would be to bring on an entry level Public Works employee who would have the ability to move towards other licensing opportunities and work with the experienced workers in order to be fully functioning when the expected retirement comes. He stated that there is a possibility that the City may even need to bring on another employee in the nearby future, noting that there is a possibility the City could lose two long-time employees to retirements with short notice and staff is trying to plan ahead.

Council member Dyvik stated that he supports bringing on an additional employee because the City Public Works Department is taking on more tasks.

Council member Kvale asked if the job description met all the requirements for posting.

Weske noted that he plans to post it on the League of Minnesota Cities site, the Minnesota Rural Water Association website, and a few others. He advised that the Star Tribune wanted about \$280 for publishing the posting, so staff has opted not to go that route. He stated that it can be difficult to find Public Works employees.

Council member Kvale asked if the City had ever targeted any of the schools in an effort to find employees.

Diercks stated that St. Cloud Tech has a water and sewer program so they may be interested in this job.

The Council discussed the proposed pay rate and other similar jobs throughout the metro area.

Mayor Miner noted that the Council will consider a motion to approve this at the regular meeting.

#### **Update Regarding Finance/Utility Billing Officer Position**

Weske stated that in November the City made a job offer to a candidate for this position, and the offer had been accepted. He explained that the individual had some health issues crop up and has not been able to work over the last five months. He stated that it sounds as though it may be at least another month or two that this individual would be unable to start employment, and he is questioning whether it is in the best interest of the City to hold the position open or if the City should repost the job and see what is out there for possible candidates.

City Attorney Thames stated that he thinks the City has been very fair with this individual but the City needs to evaluate whether this person will be able to fill the need that the City has. He stated that based on the discussions he and City Administrator Weske have had, they are proposing a new letter be sent to this individual making it clear that there is an official start date established. He stated that they are suggesting it be sometime in June, and that this would give clarity to the applicant that this is the date that the City would need to move forward and if that date cannot be met, the City will begin advertising the position. He commented that he has been in touch with the League of Minnesota Cities' human resources consultant to review the proposed letter to make sure all the bases are covered. He indicated that he is recommending having the League of Minnesota Cities sign off on the letter and that it be sent to the individual to instruct her that the start date cannot be extended further and clearly outline the expectation for a start date.

Council member Kvale asked about her legal rights because of her health issues.

City Attorney Thames stated that she does have rights, explaining that the City wants to be compassionate to her as a person, but also to make it clear that the City has essential job functions that cannot be done without an employee. He reiterated that he would like to get the League of Minnesota Cities eyes on the letter before it is sent since they have some area of expertise in this area.

Council member Jerde asked if this individual will be able to eventually work full-time.

Thames stated that this individual has represented that in her correspondence.

Weske stated that he is at the point where he needs someone in this position because there is a lot of stuff going on.

Council member Skjaret stated that he believes the City has continued to be generous with this individual and wouldn't oppose cutting ties immediately.

Council member Jerde stated that she supports giving it the two months suggested in order to give her a hard deadline of a start date.

The City Council's conclusion was that the City would move ahead with the plan as presented by City Attorney Thames and City Administrator Weske.

### **Update Regarding T-Mobile Lease Negotiations**

Thames gave a brief overview of the negotiations with T-Mobile regarding the macro-lease. He stated that the lease that is in place now is very out of date. He noted that over the years T-Mobile has received permission to add different modifications to their equipment without having to pay additional rent. He stated that it is his opinion and the opinion of the consultants, that the City is entitled to additional rent for this equipment upgrade. He stated that he has begun negotiations with them and they have implied that they intend to move their equipment to the ATC site. He stated that the City is also entitled to a rental share at that location, so if they decide to do that it may not be a bad thing for the City. He noted that as of now, T-Mobile has discontinued negotiations on this particular matter. He stated that his feeling is that if T-Mobile isn't in the current location, the City will be able to find somebody who is interested and can pay a fair market rate.

The Council discussed market rates, cost to move and relocate equipment and asked City Attorney Thames to keep them updated.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mayor Miner asked if there was any update regarding safety equipment for the pedestrian crossing on County Road 112. Diercks indicated he had obtained a quote from one vendor in the amount of about \$13,000 for equipment which included flashing signals. He noted that he had not had a chance to discuss it with Hennepin County yet. Weske stated that the County has made their position well known and they have no intention of supporting this. Diercks stated that there is a new engineer at the County, so he can reach out to that individual and see if the opinion has changed. He also noted that a street light in the corridor recently taken out by a motorist will cost \$10,000 and take about three months to be replaced. Council member Skjaret suggested that the City consider ordering matching light poles for Nelson Lakeside Park when this light is ordered.

Regarding the CR 112 Phase 1 landscaping project and berm plantings, Council member Skjaret questioned whether the tree locations could be moved up the hill a bit further. With the snow now melted, upon review of the site, he believes the tree location appears too close to the roadway. Council discussed the markings and the planned tree locations. Council member Dyvik stated that the tree planting plan in that area would be consistent with Hennepin County standards for a 30 mph section. Council member Jerde stated that she likes sumac and lilacs and thinks they would be a good combination for planting along the berm. Council member Dyvik noted that planting trees closer to the roadway may also have a traffic calming effect. Council member Skjaret asked if the City had to spend its planting credits all at one time. He stated that he would like to put a few things in and see what it actually looks like once the plants mature, then fill in where necessary with the remaining credits. The Council discussed different options for plantings and ways to create different seasonal looks that may benefit birds and attract pollinators.

Weske stated that he is looking into a third-party system for utility billing so payment can be made on-line. He asked if the Council wanted to consider adding the transaction fee onto the user.

Council member Dyvik asked if it was a money and time saver to take payment on-line rather than collecting and depositing checks. Weske stated that he did not think there would necessarily be a large efficiency savings to be realized, but the change represents a convenience for utility bill customers. He explained that he would not be in favor of enabling autopay necessarily, because he sees too many potential problems in move in/move out type situations. The Council decided that it makes sense for residents/utility bill customers to pay transaction fees if they are choosing to pay in this fashion.

**ADJOURN**

*Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:33 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske  
City Administrator